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STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE DAVID K. BRUCE, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 7376

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Over the past several years, and particularly since the end of the war, the Congress has shown a keen awareness of the problems of refugees, displaced persons and escapees. American leadership and financial support in the field of international action for the relief and resettlement of refugees has been continuously active since 1938. The record is one of which we can all be proud. It is in the finest tradition of the American people.

Our efforts have been directed along three lines: (1) care for refugees and assistance in their resettlement, (2) providing haven in this country for some refugees, and (3) assistance in the problems created by the existence of surplus populations in certain Western European countries.

Concerning care and resettlement of refugees, the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees (IGCR) was organized in August 1938 as a result of the conference convened at Evian on the initiative of President Roosevelt. The objective of the Committee was to find new homes for some seven hundred thousand refugees who were forced to leave Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia as a result of the persecutions of the Nazi regime. The Committee, in the first instance, was composed solely of immigrant-receiving countries but later, in 1943, its membership was expanded to include thirty-six of the allied and neutral countries. In its pre-war activities, the Committee endeavored to find new places of resettlement for the refugees from Central Europe and during 1944 and 1945 collaborated very closely with the U.S. War Refugee Board in securing the escape of refugees from Hitler-dominated Europe.

From 1945 to 1947, the activities of the Committee were intensified in stimulating the resettlement of refugees out of Europe. The United States Government contributed approximately two and one-half million dollars to the Committee's expenditures and shared all operating expenditures on a 50-50 basis with the United Kingdom. In the spring of 194 , the Committee was responsible for the movement of the first boatload of refugees from Germany to Paraguay. The Committee ceased operations on June 30, 1947.

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The United States Government took the leadership in organizing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in September and October 1943, and contributed slightly more than seventy percent of its total expenditures. From the very beginning, a Displaced Persons Division was established in UNRRA which assumed responsibility, with the Allied Occupation Authorities, for the housing and the administration of camps holding eight and one-half million refugees and displaced persons found in Central Europe at the end of the war. Approximately seven and one-half million of these were repatriated by the Allied Occupation Authorities and UNRRA before the termination of UNRRA's operations on June 30, 1947.

The United States assumed leadership in the organization of the International Refugee Organization during 1946 and 1947. The IRO on July 1, 1947 assumed responsibility for the care and maintenance and repatriation and resettlement of one and one-half million refugees and displaced persons in Europe transferred to it by UNRRA and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. In its four and one-half years of service, IRO registered 1,619,008 refugees, arranged for the resettlement overseas of 1,057,955 in forty-eight countries, and repatriated 72,834 to their thirty-five countries of origin. The Organization also provided for the continuing care in hospitals, institutions, or elsewhere for 31,740 persons, including dependents, who were unable for reasons of age, illness or physical defect to earn their own livelihood. Eighteen governments and a number of voluntary agencies, mostly American, collaborated in this effort. The Organization raised and spent four hundred thirty million dollars of which the United States contributed $237,116,355. IRO discontinued operations on January 31, 1952.

Anticipating the eventual termination of IRO, the United States participated within the United Nations during 1949 and 1950 in the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the primary function of which is to extend protection to refugees in their new countries of residence until they acquire citizenship.

The activities of the United States in the refugee field have not, of course, been limited to Europe. In 1948 the United States took the leadership in the United Nations General Assembly in establishing the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and was instrumental in establishing in 1949 the successor agency, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. With respect to the Far East, the United States has also taken the leadership within the United Nations to establish the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency. Thus the United States has been active on a world-wide basis to assist in caring for refugees.

Concerning the second field of our efforts, the United States has admitted to our own shores large numbers of refugees.

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In December 1945, President Truman directed the competent federal agencies to take full advantage of existing immigration laws to grant admission to the United States of refugees from Germany and Austria. Some forty-two thousand were admitted to the United States under this directive by June 30, 1947.

The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 provided for the admission of 205,000 refugees who had arrived in Germany, Austria, and Italy prior to December 22, 1945. The amended Displaced Persons Act of 1948 went into effect on June 16, 1950, and extended the benefits of the Act to those who had arrived in those countries prior to January 1, 1949. The authorization for visa issuance under the Act was increased from 205,000 to 341,000. In addition, the admission of 5,000 non-quota war orphans and [illegible],744 German expellees was authorized. To date, 323,942 refugees have entered the United States under Sections 2 and 3 of the Act, and 27,096 German refugees under Section 12, totaling 351,038. Visas may be issued to German refugees until June 30, 1952, and it is anticipated that all visas authorized for them will be issued well before that date.

In the third field -- overpopulation -- Congress and the Department have recognized the problems created by the existence of surplus populations in Europe. Not only has Western Europe been burdened with thousands of refugees whose welfare is of concern to us, but in many areas, particularly those which have traditionally been sources of migrants, there developed severe population pressures. This condition, particularly when combined with a refugee problem of significant proportions, has made more difficult the progress towards political and economic stability in Europe.

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The Congress has already authorized two programs to relieve the present European situation. With respect to the problem of overpopulation, the Belgian Government, at the request of the United States Government, convened a Conference on Migration at Brussels in November and December 1951. Twenty-seven governments attended. Sixteen governments supported a resolution which was adopted establishing the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee on the Movement of Migrants from Europe. The Committee now has a membership of nineteen governments and has held two sessions. It has adopted a budget of forty-one million dollars and proposes to move 137,000 migrants, including refugees, out of Europe in the calendar year 1952. The United States will make a direct contribution of ten million dollars to the Committee. Included in the Mutual Security Bill presently under consideration by the Congress is a request for ten million dollars to cover the U.S. contribution to the Migration Committee for its second year of operation. The migrants and refugees concerned will be transported to Canada, the United States, Venezuela, Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand on ships transferred to the Committee by IRO on its termination. Over thirty-two thousand persons were moved by the Committee in the first three months of operation.

With respect to escapees, section 101 (a) (1) of the Mutual Security Act of 1951 authorized the use of Title I funds for any selected persons who have escaped from certain communist-controlled or communist-dominated countries or areas of Europe. On March 22, of this year, the President, acting under this authority, authorized a $4,300,000 program to assist certain refugees who have escaped from behind the Iron Curtain. These persons have been granted

granted asylum in the countries bordering the Iron Curtain, notably Western Germany, Austria, Trieste, Italy, Greece and Turkey, whose governments are now carrying the main responsibility for provision of food and shelter. Assistance in this has also been extended by private voluntary organizations. The Escapee Program will supplement -- but in no sense supersede -- these efforts. The program is designed: (1) to improve standards of care and maintenance for those who have risked their lives in the hope of finding freedom in the West; and (2) to aid in the permanent resettlement of these persons, either locally or overseas, to permit them to reestablish their lives in the free world community. The Department of State has accepted responsibility for carrying out this program, and action is now proceeding rapidly to commence program operations.

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H.R. 7376 constitutes the next logical step in the continuing efforts on the part of the United States to assist refugees and to reduce surplus populations.

The pressure of surplus population in Western Europe persists in Italy, Western Germany, the Netherlands and Greece. This problem is intensified by the continued inflow of refugees from the Eastern European countries under Soviet domination. The possibility of assimilating the excess which now exists in Western Europe at a tolerable level of living and advantageous level of productivity is very remote since, even with the rearmament effort, foreseeable employment and resettlement opportunities are inadequate. Continued emigration on a larger scale than that obtaining since the war has been and should further be encouraged as one means of relieving this pressure. It cannot, in our view, be the primary means. The major emphasis must be upon economic improvement within the particular countries and within the European area as a whole. However, overseas emigration is an important factor in any solution of the problem.

The interest of the United States in a solution of overpopulation problems in Europe is substantial, due to the economic burden and the social and political tensions arising from overpopulation. The continued burden of non-productive people in these countries presents serious handicaps to the successful realization of our primary effort to establish security in Europe. These handicaps constitute a weakness behind the military strength being developed in Western Europe. They are likewise a threat to the economic and political stability upon which a successful military defense must depend.

Within the past two years the United States has repeatedly expressed its concern with the problem of overpopulation in certain Western European countries. The British, French and United States Foreign Ministers in a declaration at London on May 13, 1950, recognized "that the excess of population from which several countries of Western Europe are suffering is one of the most important elements in the difficulties and disequilibrium of the world" and in November 1950 they adopted the report of the conference of experts on migration held at Paris in July and August of that year.

The importance of this problem to European defense and stability has been fully recognized by the North Atlantic

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Organization, particularly in resolutions and reports adopted by the Ninth Session of the North Atlantic Council at Lisbon. The report of the Temporary Council Committee, which was adopted by the Council at Lisbon, emphasized the importance of manpower problems in relation to political as well as economic stability in Western Europe. While noting the possibilities for a certain measure of relief through increased defense production, the report urged the need for a substantial increase in emigration, especially from Italy, for adequate alleviation of the problem. The Committee on the North Atlantic Community, in a report also adopted by the Council, reviewed the manpower situation and drew the conclusion that increased emigration from certain countries is essential to European stability. Representatives of the United States shared in the preparation of these analyses and in the decision to adopt the resulting reports taken by the Council at Lisbon.

Since overpopulation in Western Europe represents a threat to the political and economic security of that area, it has a direct and important effect upon the security and welfare of the United States. Especially in Italy and Western Germany, the problem of overpopulation in its present acute form arises from special circumstances. An emergency international effort, in which the United States shares, to relieve population pressure would serve to reestablish a manageable situation in which the natural increase in population could be absorbed either through domestic integration or normal emigration. It is within that framework that the proposals of H.R. 7376 provide an opportunity for the United States to make a further tangible and effective contribution.

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To the problems of overpopulation has been added the burden created by the presence in Western Europe of approximately 16,000 refugees from Communism. These are people who have lost their homes, their property, and often their families. They have a deep hatred for communism; they know from experience what it means. They have a deep love of freedom, having been so long without it.

They have fled from the Baltic countries, from Czechoslovakia and Poland, from Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania and the Soviet Union. They have escaped, but they have not yet found complete freedom -- freedom to work and to become useful citizens. It is this opportunity which they now seek.

Due to the conditions under which the refugees must flee their homes, they arrive in Western Europe destitute and are at once faced with the necessity either to fight for a meagre existence in a strange land, which already is burdened with surplus population of its own, or to accept gratuitous care with the attendant demeaning of self-respect. If we should leave them to shift for themselves in the already over burdened economies of Germany, Austria, Italy, Trieste, Greece and Turkey, they will become disillusioned as to what Western democracy really means.

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We are helping these refugees. Through the Escapee Program we will supplement their care and maintenance and help them to emigrate elsewhere. Because few of them can enter the United States under our present laws, we must rely largely on Australia, Canada and other governments to accept them. The number of persons who can be moved to these countries is limited. If we are not to be charged with neglect of these enemies of Communism, it is essential that we offer to some of them the opportunity to begin life anew in our country.

If these refugees remain in the countries bordering the Iron Curtain, they add to the economic difficulties of these countries already suffering from surplus population and war-weakened economies. This is an element of weakness in areas whose strength is of vital importance to the United States.

It should also be mentioned that we have certain needs ourselves that these refugees can fill. We need information as to what actually happens behind the Iron Curtain so that we may bend our efforts in the proper directions. These needs the refugees are best qualified to fill. We can use their experiences under the terror regime to inform other lands of what existence under Communism really means. If utilized and given the opportunity to find the freedom they seek, the refugees could contribute materially to the welfare and security of the United States. If ignored, they could only be a barrier to the accomplishment of our objectives.

We must continue our program of supplementary care given these refugees by the countries which border the Iron Curtain. We must help to feed, clothe, and house them adequately. We must see that they are given the training necessary to enable them to find work and a place in the North Atlantic community. But these are largely interim measures which are necessary to maintain hope and spirit while they await the opportunity to move onward to new homes. If our policy of resistance to communism is not to appear illusory, it is important that we allow a goodly number of these people who have so well demonstrated their resistance to Communism to find the freedom they seek in America.

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